

Happiness: *Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling.* —Margaret Lee Runbeck, author

Boost to District from interns, summer students, temporary hires works both ways

Story and photographs by Alexander Kufel

HED Commander Lt. Col. Ronald N. Light says it best: "The improved quality of life that we seem to have been enjoying lately in the District may be due in part to the contributions of temporary and summer employees made during their time with us. We need to recognize their efforts."

Many offices look forward to a yearly influx of people who can help with day-to-day activities while learning on-the-job. The experience, however, is not necessarily one-sided, and each temporary and summer employee expressed appreciation for what they learned while on the job. Those sentiments are perhaps best expressed by summer-hire Mavis Li from Ewa Beach, currently an engineering student at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, who wrote a memorandum chronicling her experience (See sidebar).



(Above) Kimberly Freeman, Ft. Shafter Resident Office (FSRO); Lt. Col. Ronald N. Light, HED Commander; Mavis Li, FSRO; Esmar Fagarang, Job Help Store; Not pictured are: Kristopher Li and Yvette Nozaki, RM; Kimberlee Low, Keane Nishimoto, Delfin Rufo, Jr. and Stephanie Kanai, PPM; Teri Hall, Lyle Otineru, Roberta Hsu, and Daniel Mahi, E&C; Paola Rosado and Paul Fritz, Jr., FSRO; Arthur Perkins, LM; Pak Ho Chan, RM.



—Photo by Michelle Cain

(Left) Craig Flowers, a fourth-year cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., gets a hands-on lesson in engineering at Tripler Army Medical Center from Glenn Ishihara, construction representative with HED's Fort Shafter Resident Office. Flowers spent three weeks with FSRO. This is the first year that Hawaii has been one of the destinations for students to select from. (Right) West Point graduate 1st Lt. Tom Piazza came to HED on a TDY assignment enroute to his next duty station.

(Below far-left) Al-Aakhir Grimes-Rogers, Engineering Services. (Below left) Gary Li discusses work with Jyun Yamamoto, Contracting Division. (Below center) Paulette Choy and Barbara Mills, Real Estate (RE). (Below right) Jenelle Wong, Design Br. (Below far-right) Casey Hiraiwa, Design Branch.)



Lessons Learned August 31, 2001

In my short stint with the Corps of Engineers as a student summer hire, I had the wonderful opportunity to step over the yellow construction tape for a first-hand, up-close view of engineering and construction. Of course, it hasn't necessarily been what I expected, but that's the idea, isn't it?

The first time I tagged along to a job site was to Building 502 on Fort Shafter. Luck would have it that the workers had stopped the elevator on an upper floor, so we trudged up eight flights of stairs. And what, exactly, awaited us at the top? Nothing—literally. The contractors had been demolishing the existing fixtures, walls, and cabinets. Nonetheless, I was still excited. It was a new experience for me. The best part is that every time I saw that building, it looked different—new piping and wires appeared; more walls disappeared. It's like I'm seeing the transformation in time-lapse photography. Absolutely amazing....

All summer, just when I thought I had my alphabet nailed down, a slur of letters kept being thrown at me: USACE... POH... FSRO... EC... AHA... RMS... MSDS... AE... PAT. Everyone talked as if that were a natural part of their language. And there I'd be staring at them. "Huh? Come again?" But after several weeks in USACE with POH at FSRO, I began to understand. And, to my surprise, strings of letters started coming out of my mouth....

What I found very interesting about the Corps is its emphasis on teamwork, rather than having a single "supervisor" and his/her subordinates address one little piece of the puzzle at a time.... Thank you HED. It's been a great summer!

Mavis Li

